

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

Sub A1 1. An system for maintaining and distributing a work scheduling comprising:
a schedule generator configured to generate work schedule data for a
5 plurality of workers;
a database in communication with said schedule generator for storing said
work schedule data; and
at least one employee interface positioned at one or more locations within
a work environment, wherein said at least one employee interface is in
10 communication with said schedule generator and is configured to
display work schedule data.

Sub B1 2. The system of Claim 1 wherein said work schedule data comprises data
regarding employee work schedules that are not generated around one or more
15 predetermined work shifts.

Sub A2 3. The system of Claim 1 further including a display monitor configured to
display work schedule data to a plurality of workers.

20 4. The system of Claim 1 further including an attendance module configured to
utilize said work schedule data and data regarding which workers are present in the work
place to determine worker attendance.

5. The system of Claim 1 further including a remote user interface in communication with said database to facilitate access by a remote user.

5 6. The system of Claim 1 wherein said employee interface comprises a networked computer having software to facilitate access to said work schedule data.

7. The employee interface of Claim 6 wherein said employee interface further includes a printer.

10 8. A system to distribute a work schedule to a work force and allow for modifications to said work schedule comprising:

at least one data storage device to store schedule data;

15 at least one computing device in communication with said at least one data storage device to organize, oversee distribution, and modify said schedule data; and

at least one kiosk located remote from said computing device, said at least one kiosk in communication with said computing device to provide an interface for a worker to view their work schedule or propose changes to their work schedule.

20 9. The system of Claim 8 wherein said at least one kiosk includes a display and user interface software.

10. The system of Claim 8 further including an overhead display monitor in communication with said computing device to display schedule information to a plurality of workers.

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11. The system of Claim 8 further including an interface with an activity monitoring device in communication with said computing device to determine the presence of a worker at a place of work.

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12. The system of Claim 8 further including an interface with an activity monitoring device in communication with said computing device to monitor the activity of a worker at a place of work.

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13. The system of Claim 11 wherein said monitoring device comprises an electronic time clock.

14. The system of Claim 8 wherein said kiosk comprises a networked computer having software configured to provide an employee interface.

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15. The system of Claim 8 wherein said data storage device comprises a hard disk drive.

16. A method for distributing and modifying a work schedule comprising:

storing work schedule data in a database, wherein said work schedule data
defines the work schedules of a plurality of employees;
providing employee access to said work schedules at one or more
terminals located at one or more locations within a place of business;
creating opportunities for employees to modify their work schedule; and
transmitting said opportunities to said one or more terminals wherein at
said one or more terminals employees may access their work schedule
to sign-up for said opportunities to modify their work schedule.

17. The method of Claim 16 wherein said modify their work schedule comprises
signing up to work additional hours or signing up to work fewer hours.

18. The method of Claim 16 wherein said creating opportunities comprises
generating sheets and displaying said sheets on at least one of an overhead display or at
least one of a terminal.

19. The method of Claim 16 further including the steps of;

establishing a pool to which employees may post shifts that are
available for trade;
allowing employees to post shifts to said pool;
allowing employees to accept shifts from said pool; and

modifying said employee work schedules based on said posting to
said pool and said acceptance of shifts from said pool.

20. The method of Claim 19 wherein said pool comprises a listing stored on said
5 database of proposed shift changes posted by employees.

21. The method of Claim 19 further including displaying said shifts posted to said
pool on a display for viewing by a plurality of employees.

10 22. The method of Claim 16 wherein said one or more terminals comprise one or
more overhead display monitors and one or more kiosks.

23. The method of Claim 16 further including the steps of:

15 modifying said employee schedules in responses to an employee
signing-up for said opportunities for employees to modify their work
schedule; and
storing said modified schedules in said database.

24. The method of Claim 18, wherein said terminal comprises a kiosk.

20 25. A method for modifying a schedule to account for changes in workload
comprising:

creating a sheet having one or more slots for a work shift;
transmitting said sheet for viewing by a plurality of employees;
monitoring for a sign-up to a slot on said sheet by a signing-up
employee; and
5 upon detecting a sign-up to said sheet;
accepting said sign-up onto said sheet;
modifying said sheet to reflect said sign-up;
modifying said signing-up employee's schedule to reflect said
sign-up.

10 26. The method of Claim 25 wherein creating a sheet comprises using a computer
to create a sign-up page having one or more sign-up slots to increase or decrease the
number of workers scheduled to work during a particular period.

15 27. The method of Claim 25 wherein said sign-up comprises an employee signing
up on a slot to either work said work shift on the sheet or take off the particular work
shift on the sheet.

20 28. The method of Claim 25 wherein transmitting further comprises showing said
sheet to only employees qualified to work said work shift listed on said sheet.

29. The method of Claim 25 further including closing said sheet if all of said one or more slots are filled due to sign-ups.

30. The method of Claim 25 wherein posting comprises displaying said sheet on
5 at least one over head display or making said sheet available via an employee interface.

31. A method for employees to change their work schedule using a scheduling system comprising:

10 creating a proposed shift trade, said proposed shift trade including at least posting employee shift information regarding shift hours and shift date;

posting said proposed shift trade to a shift pool, said shift pool
B' configured to accept responses to said posting from other employees;

displaying said shift pool to a plurality of other employees;

15 monitoring said shift pool for a response from at least one responding employee to accept said proposed shift trade; and

whereby upon receiving said response, said method

accepts said response;

updates the work schedules of said posting employee and said
20 responding employee; and

removes said proposed shift trade from said shift pool.

32. The method of Claim 31 wherein said shift pool comprises a listing of proposed shift trades that can be viewed by employees seeking to modify their schedule.

5 33. The method of Claim 31 wherein said posting allows other employees to view and sign-up for said proposed shift trade.

34. The method of Claim 31 further including the step of displaying to an employee on an employee interface only the proposed shift trades that said employee on an employee interface is qualified to perform.

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35. The method of Claim 31 wherein creating a proposed shift trade comprises;
logging onto said scheduling system at an employee interface; and
selecting which shift hours of a proposed shift trade said posting
employee desires to post.

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36. A method for taking employee attendance in a work environment having a plurality of employees comprising:

obtaining employee schedule data from one or more scheduling
systems, said employee schedule data indicating the dates and times
particular employees are scheduled to work;
obtaining employee status data regarding which employees are at
work;

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comparing said employee schedule data and said employee status data
to determine at least which scheduled employees are not present; and
storing said results of said comparing.

5 37. The method of Claim 36, wherein said obtaining employee schedule data
comprises polling a database to obtain schedule data created by said one or more
scheduling system.

38. The method of Claim 36, wherein obtaining employee status data comprises
10 interfacing with a network computer system to determine which employees are utilizing
said network computer system.

39. The method of Claim 36 further including the steps of communicating results
of said comparing to a violations sub-module.

15 40. The method of Claim 36 wherein comparing further comprises determining
which employees are at work although not scheduled to work.

41. A method for scheduling a plurality of employees comprising:

20 for a first employee, assigning at least one shift start time and at least
one shift stop time for each of one or more work days based on the
particular needs of the employer or the desires of the employee;

for a second employee, assigning at least one shift start time and at least one shift stop time for each of one or more work days based on the particular needs of the employer or the desires of the employee; and

for a plurality of other employees, assigning at least one shift start time and at least one shift stop time for each of one or more work days based on the particular needs of the employer or the desires of the employee;

wherein said start times and stop times for said first, said second and said plurality of other employees are not confined to predefined work shifts.

42. The method of Claim 41 wherein said predefined work shifts comprises division of the day into three 8-hour shifts.

43. The method of Claim 41 wherein said predefined work shifts start and stop at generally the same time.

44. A scheduling apparatus for creating and displaying a work schedule comprising:

means for creating a schedule for each of a plurality of employees;
means for storing said schedule as schedule data;
means for allowing said employees to view said schedule data at a remote location;

means for retrieving said schedule data from said means for
storing; and

means for displaying said schedule data to at least one of said
employees at said remote location.

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45. The scheduling apparatus of Claim 44, further including means for printing
said schedule upon request of one of said employees.

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46. The scheduling apparatus of Claim 44 further including means for posting one
or more sheets for display to said employees whereby said one or more sheets comprise a
request to employees to optionally sign-up for increased or decreased work hours as
specified on said one or more sheets.

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47. The scheduling apparatus of Claim 44 further including means for posting
employee initiated shift trade requests for viewing and sign-up by said one or more
employees.

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48. The scheduling apparatus of Claim 44 further including means for comparing
schedule data regarding employees that are scheduled to be working and worker status
data regarding employees that are actually at work to determine which employees are
scheduled but not working.

49. A computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having computer program logic recorded thereon for providing an automated employee schedule distribution system for use by an entity to distribute employee schedules to assist in the modification of employee schedules, said computer usable medium comprising:

5 computer program code logic configured to store schedule data on a storage medium, wherein said schedule data comprises the work schedules of a plurality of employees;

computer program code logic configured to monitor for requests for said employee data from employees at employee interfaces;

10 computer program code logic configured to transmit said employee data to said employee interface;

B' computer program code logic configured to allow for establishment of at least one sheet containing slots for employees to sign-up for additional or reduced hours

15 computer program code logic configured to display said at least one sheet to at least one employee; and

computer program code logic configured to accept employee sign-up to said at least one sheet.

20 50. The computer program product of Claim 49 wherein said storage medium comprises a hard disk drive.

51. The computer program product of Claim 49 further including computer program code logic configured to allow a posting employee to post proposed shift trades to a shift pool.

52. The computer program product of Claim 51 further including computer program code logic configured to display said shift pool so that employees other than posting employees can view said proposed shift trades and sign-up to work shifts in said shift pool of proposed shift trades.